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By Henry Dacre.

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Joseph Brown .....	A Draper's Assistant
Polio Mc.Shiver.....	An Amateur Tragedian
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Ethel Goodall.....	In love with Stern
Kate Boniface .....	In love with Speed
Lucy Hill .....	In love with Brown
Aurora Clements .....	In love with Mc.Shiver
Victoria Martha .....	Servant to the Clements

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# A SPRIG OF HOLLY.

A HUMOROUS SKETCH.

BY HENRY DACRE.

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## CHARACTERS.

CHARLES SPEED, a Railway Clerk.  
OSMOND STERN, an Assistant Schoolmaster.  
JOSEPH BROWN, a Draper's Assistant.  
POLIO Mc.SHIVER, an Amateur Tragedian.  
MOSES GREEN, a green young wife-hunter.  
ETHEL GOODALL, in love with STERN.  
KATE BONIFACE, in love with SPEED.  
LUCY HILL, in love with BROWN.  
AURORA CLEMENTS, in love with Mc.SHIVER.  
VICTORIA MARTHA, servant to the CLEMENTS. In love with most young men.

SCENE.—*A parlour. Decorations of holly, paper festoons, &c. A mistletoe bush hangs centre. Card bearing large lettered inscription, "A Merry Christmas." Table near on which are decanters, containing wine (otherwise weak tea).*

Enter VIC. MAR. (*sniffs*).—A merry Kreshmush indeed! Isn't it likely? When I shall be a dancin intendance on my lady and her acquaintances all this blessed night and termorrer it'll be Kreshmush day (*sniffs*)—then it'll be cook this, an' scrub that, until all my appletite 'll fly up the chimney! There *are* one consultation, and that's the new butcher's man. He's promised to keep me company as often as he passes our house, an' I'm proud, for he's got just the finest head of hair in the trade. But lawk! all this furnitcher has got to be dusted and (*dusts furniture*)—and—and—(*after a short silence*) now what was I a thinkin about? Oh! the butcher. Well, his marster sells American meat, but

what do I care for his marster's meanness (*suddenly remembering her work*). They say as their meat's never fresh, but that doesn't take the curl out of *his* hair, nor stops *his* mustache from growin'. I wonders when *my* old marster's goin' to come home, altho' he's quite welcome to stop where he is. Hello! here's a noosepaper (*picks one from floor*). It's many a day since I enjoyed a good murder or a nice hexicution (*sits in easy chair*). WHAT bliss! Oh lor! it's all adwertisemints—there's nothink else. A reglar swingle and no mistake. What's it called? (*reads*) "The Mat ri—money all Times, and Marriage Gazetty, price 3., by post 3½. Registered as a noosepaper." Oh, very well, Miss Rora, I'll tell yer par when he comes home. "Monimatri-all Times." This is one of them there things what yer has to adwertise in when yer wants a new chap I guess. (*Reads in silence for a few moments.*) Here's a nice one for instants. "A lady of means desires to cor—resp—ond—correspond with a gentleman of good ap—ap—apperients an' lovin habits. Address, 101, Great Comfort Street, Mulchester." Why, it's old Miss Groggs what lives ten doors higher up. 101 Great Comfort Street, and this is 111. Well, of all the old patched up, red-nosed old—Oh heavings! here's the missus (*dusts. Enter AURORA arrrranging her dress.*) Lor! how lovely she does look. How skerumptious her dress does sit, and the bit of holly in her hair, and everything—oh! (*Inspects AURORA from top to toe repeatedly, and then suddenly breaks a large piece of holly from the wall, and after fixing it awkwardly in her hair, admires herself through the looking-glass.*)

AUR.—Now, Martha (*turns and sees VICTORIA in an extravagant pose*), what on earth are you doing? Have you everything in perfect readiness for my friends?

VIC. MAR. (*proudly*).—Pardin me, miss, but I prefer my first name, which it's Victoria.

AUR.—That is no answer to my question, *Victoria!*

VIC. MAR.—Everything is *prefectly* ready, miss. You didn't say how many gentlemen there was to do for, miss.

AUR.—Didn't I? Four.

VIC. MAR.—And ladies miss?

AUR.—Three.



VIC. MAR.—An' yerself—thats four. *Eggs-ackerly*. Would it be imperent if I was to try and guess one of the gent's names?

AUR.—It would be *most* impertinent.

VIC. MAR.—In course, you ought to know betterer than me about inperence; but I was only a thinking that Mr. Mc.Shiv—

AUR.—Martha! (*angrily*.)

VIC. MAR.—Vicioria if yer please. (*A knock without*).

AUR.—They are here now. Attend, quick. (*Exit VIC. MAR.*) I wonder how they will be dressed. Not that *I* expect to be put in the shade, for Kate has only the same that she has worn at all the last season's parties, and as for Lucy—

[*Enter ETHEL, KATE, and LUCY, each wearing a sprig of holly who are all warmly welcomed by AURORA,*]

ETHEL,  
KATE, } (*After mutual greetings.*) Well, are they coming?  
LUCY, }

AUR. (*takes four notes from pockets*)—Oh yes! See, here are their notes. This one is from Mr. Speed.

(*KATE is confused. The others laugh at her.*)

(*Reads.*) “Shall be most happy to join you at the proposed hour.”

OMNES.—How nice (*&c.*)

AUR.—This is from Mr. Stern.

(*ETHEL blushes. The others laugh at her.*)

(*Reads.*) “Eight o'clock will arrive when I shall.”

OMNES.—Proper (*&c.*)

AUR.—*This* is from Mr. Brown.

(*LUCY looks abashed. The others laugh.*)

(*Reads.*) “As our shop does not close till eleven, I shall have to get leave for seven so as to arrive at eight, I shall try and do so.”

OMNES (*Sympathetically*).—Oooh!

AUR.—Such trouble—and all for *our* sakes.

ETHEL.—Such self-abnegation.

LUCY.—Such—such—er—isn't it?

KATE.—Very nice of him, I'm sure.

(AURORA—*is about to replace all the letters.*)

OMNES.—What about the other letter.

AURORA.—Oh! that is mine, you know.

KATE (*Snatches it from her*).—THIS (*mimicing AURORA*) *is from Polio Mc.Shiver! (AURORA covers her face in her handkerchief. The others laugh louder than ever.)*

(*Reads.*) “ My soul's sweet idol,  
Darkness reigns within this panting heart  
When separated from thy precious self.  
Thy eyes are like the keen Electric light  
That dazzles as we gaze; but when withdrawn  
Throws us in blackness deeper than before.  
Tho' it may blind me when we part again,  
I, moth-like, seek my own destruction.

Thine own Polio.”

OMNES (*Clasping their hands in admiration*).—Oh!

ETHEL (*Seriously*).—Girls! It reads like Shakespeare.

Kate. (*to AURORA*)—Lucky Aurora! to possess such a—  
Here take your letter back, you'll very likely want it  
(*suggestively*) to read over and over again at your leisure.

[*Enter VICTORIA MARTHA.*]

VIC. MAR.—If you please, miss, there's a gent at the door,  
what zed as he's the honner to send this. (*Offers rather large card*).

AUR. (*Takes it and reads*)—“ Mr. Joseph Brown.”

KATE.—How fashionable! Show him up by all means.

[*Exit VIC. MAR.*]

ETHEL.—Oh! I say, the card is made out of a collar box.  
(*All laugh, except LUCY. Enter BROWN, wearing an extravagant display of linen. Shakes hands all round.*)

BROWN.—A merry Christmas, ladies, and a Happy New Year when it comes.



OMNES.—Same to you, Mr. Brown.

BROWN (*Shoppily*)—Well! and how are things looking, and how do we all feel, eh!

[*Re-enter VIC. MAR.*]

VIC. MAR.—If yer please, there's another chap—I means gent, what wants to come up. He says as his name's Mr. Speed.

AUR.—It's Charlie. Show him up, Victoria.

VIC. MAR.—Oh my poor legs. (*Shouts through door*). You're to come up.

AUR.—(*Angrily*). Victoria Martha!

VIC. MAR.—Oh mussey! (*Vanishes*).

[*Enter SPEED.*]

SPEED.—A jolly merry Christmas, ladies and gentlemen.

OMNES.—Thank you. (*&c.*)

SPEED.—(*After shaking hands with all*). Spendid night outside. Snow on the ground, moon out, and all that sort of thing, you know.

[*Enter VIC. MAR.*]

VIC. MAR.—How my legs does ache. If yer please, there's Mr. Stern, now. Here's *his* ticket.

AUR.—Ticket? Card, you mean! Admit him.

[*Exit VIC. MAR.*]

Kate.—They're all keeping very good time.

[*Enter STERN, solemnly.*]

STERN.—A happy Christmas to all. (*Walks slowly to each and shakes hands.*) I trust I find you all in excellent health. By the way, it's very healthy weather and most seasonable, I noticed as I came past the school that the frost had——

[*Enter VIC. MAR.*]

VIC. MAR.—Drat them stairs! There's another one, now, miss!

AUR.—Another what?

VIC. MAR.—Another thingummy whatyermay callit.

[*Enter* POLIO Mc.SHIVER *sensationally*. *He pushes* VIC. MAR. *at one side and strikes pose.*]

Mc.SHIV.—(Basso profundo). Ha, Ha!! The compliments of the season. (*Shaking hands*). How is the ever charming hostess, the fair Miss Hill, the fascinating Miss Goodall, and the entrancing Miss Boniface? All well! I am glad. And you gentlemen (to whom my duty) how fares it with you? (*Turns and sees* VIC. MAR. *who is rapt in admiration at his manner*). And how fares it with the kitchen-wench, our ever faithful Victoria Martha? (*Takes her face between his hands*).

VIC. MAR.—(*Bashfully*). Oh! I'm very well, thank yer, how're you?

AUR.—(*With suppressed passion*). Vic-to-ria Mar-tha!!

VIC. MAR.—(*Freeing herself*). Oh! gracious! I clear forgot as he was *hers*. (*Going*.)

AUR.—Martha!

VIC.—Victoria if *you* please.

AUR.—Is everything quite ready below?

VIC. MAR.—(*Aside*). How many more times is she agoin' to ask that? Everythink.

AUR.—(*To all, who have formed themselves into interesting couples*) There is a cold collation down stairs, and afterwards a musical party. Have you any objections?

OMNES.—Oh! none at all, none at all.

AUR.—Then (*Taking* Mc.SHIVER's *arm*), we will lead the way.

[*Exit in couples*. VIC. MAR. *folds her arms, sets herself erect, and mimicing the company, marches off, "Oh, none at all, none at all!"*]

[*Enter* MOSES GREEN.]

(*Looks dazedly round, reads the inscription and examines decorations*).

MOSES G.—Wall, aw supposas as this is th' shop; un awm varra fain awse fun it. Aw wonders what hoo's loike, un if awse hev to bide lung afore hoo cums. (*Carries easy chair*). Hoo mon be weel off ter hev sich loike cheers as this un. (*Sits*) By gum! bud uts rare an' soft, this. Uts loike sittin' on a cart-load of hay when uts gooin' o'er a bad rooad, ut springs









soa. Leds see. Wheer eev aw pud th' letter as hoo sent mer? in hear somewheer! (*Feels in trousers pockets*). Hoo mon ha' bin varra hard up when hoo advertises for a mon, un by gow! soa mon oi for a woman or aw'd never ha' onsured ut. But heaw mon a chap do? Theer's nooan o' th' city lasses what'll hev mer; some on em laughs at mer, some on 'em turns ther nooses at mer, un t'thers pities mer, soa what mon a chap do? Whoy, eawt. Heur's th' letter. (*Drags crumpled paper from pocket*). Aw'll just reud ut once ageun to mek sour aw'm not i' bed. (*Reads*).

111, Gret Cumfert Street,

(That's heur.)

Dec. 23rd

Dear Sir,

I hev just received yore varra koind onswer to moy advartisement, un awr shud be happy to see *you* at th' above ad-dress on Christ-mas eve—(aw reckon hoo meuns Kesmus). Theer mabbe other com-pany present, bud yo will know me as I shall wur a sprig o' holly in me hur.

Yours sintceurly,

ANGELINA GROGGS.

Agelina Groggs—noice name and no mistake. (*In a whisper*). Mabbee hoo'll heur mer if aw spakes soo laird.

VIC. MAR. (*singing off.*)

“Many a time I am sad at heart  
An' haven't a word to say.”

MOSES G.—That's hor. ~~Lorchus! hoo's geet vice enoo if naught else?~~ *Bedad, an' her voice is strong*

[*Enter VICTORIA, goes to table.*]

VIC. MAR. (*commencing afresh.*)

“Many a time I am sad at heart  
(*Pours out glass of wine and drinks it off.*)

(*continuing*) And haven't a word to (*drinks another*) say.”

MOSES G.—Theer waint be much sadness left in a bit—nor sperrits nyther.

VIC. MAR. (*singing*)—“I'll keep from the lads and the lasses” (*drinks*).

MOSES G.—Aye! But ~~tha'~~ sticks to th' glasses,

*Yes!*

*yes*

VIC. MAR. (coming forward)—Werry good too, an' ony what I deserves considerin. They're not agoin to have all the pleasure to themselves. (Sees MOSES G.) Oh hevvings! A man! I gone and left the front door open!

MOSES G.—~~Na then! tha's no need to look se skeart.~~ *Shure now, there's no need for ye to be lukin' tight.* ~~Dusn't ta know mer.~~ *Doubt ye know me?*

VIC. MAR.—Parding me, sir, if I seems rude; but—have you got a hinvitation?

MOSES G.—~~If course aw hev.~~ *or have. Luk there* ~~Sitha!~~ (Holds letter out for inspection.)

VIC. MAR.—Oh! Its quite right. You see—

MOSES G.—~~Eh! tha's no need ta exkews thisel.~~ *och now aw don't be excusin' yerself.* Give us a kiss for a start. ~~Aw see tha's geet this sprig o' holly~~ *you've got* ~~an abrygh~~

AUR. (from below)—Victoria Martha!

VIC. MAR.—Exqueese me, but there's the missus—

AUR. (from below)—Victoria Martha, I say!

VIC. MAR.—Oh bother! Just at sich a hinterestin' moment too. (Exit.)

MOSES G.—~~Hoo's not Angelina afther~~ *she's* ~~all~~ *all* Victory Martha—~~Hoo's a gradely lass for o hoo's geet such a joe-smashin' name.~~ (Sits.)

*she's a fine girl too barrin' the name.*  
[Enter LUCY.]

LUCY.—The very idea of Joseph turning jealous! If there is one thnig that I despise it is jealousy—so I have left him to it.

MOSES G.—(who has been peeping round chair back)—Sprig o holly agen. This ~~mon~~ *must* be th' rect-un. *right wan.*

LUCY.—Yes, I will take a seat here till such time as he may feel penitent enough to come and take me down again. (Sits on MOSES.) Oh!—I—sir—

MOSES G.—Don't put thysel awt o'th rooad. ~~Awn th' chap as tha axed to come an' sit~~ *I'm just the way you asked* ~~tha~~ *yes*

LUCY (nervously embarrassed). Oh, sir—believe me, I—

MOSES G.—~~Dang pollygoism!~~ *How appologizing* (aside) Eh! but this ~~un~~ *Bedad* is noicer than t'other. (Aloud) Wall! ~~aw~~ *wan,* guess we'd better *on*



*make square*

~~make~~ things ~~square~~. (Places his handkerchief carefully upon the floor and kneels upon it.)

LUCY.—Whatever is the man going to do? And who is he? (BROWN appears.)

*How thin, yes*  
 MOSES G.—Neaw then, ~~the~~ *husband an* s advertoised for a ~~fellow an~~  
*oive* ~~awve~~ answered ~~it~~, an neaw aw'll put th' finishin' touch to it.

LUCY.—But, sir, there is some mis—

MOSES G.—Shurrap till *oive* ~~awve~~ dun. *bi* Aw looves ~~the~~ *ye*  
 (Grasps her hand.)

BROWN (*coming forward*).—What do you mean, sir? Let loose this lady's hand this minute.

*It's out o' it*  
 MOSES G.—~~Thee heek it!~~ *you* Tha knows ~~nawt abawt this~~  
*little job. at all!* *nothin' about, at all*

LUCY.—Let me go, sir, I beg of you.

BROWN.—Yes, let her go, or I'll—*you'll*

MOSES G. (*rising and sparring*).—*you'll* Tha'll what? (Exit BROWN terrified.)

VIC. MAR. (coming forward)—Werry good too, an' ony what I deserves considerin. They're not agoin to have all the pleasure to themselves. (Sees MOSES G.) Oh hevvings! A man! I gone and left the front door open!

MOSES G.—~~Na then! tha's no need to look se skeart.~~ *Shure now, there's no need for ye to be lukin' se*  
~~Dusn't ta know mer.~~ *Doubt ye know me!*

VIC. MAR.—Parding me, sir, if I seems rude; but—have you got a hinvitation?

MOSES G.—~~If course aw her.~~ *or have. Luk there* ~~Sitha!~~ (Holds letter out for inspection.)

VIC. MAR.—Oh! Its quite right. You see—

MOSES G.—~~Eh! tha's no need ta exkews thisel.~~ *och now an' doubt be excusin' yerself.* Give us a kiss for a start. ~~Aw see tha's geet thi sprig o' holly~~ *you're jk* ~~an' abright~~

AUR. (from below)—Victoria Martha!

VIC. MAR.—Exqueese me, but there's the missus—

AUR. (from below)—Victoria Martha, I say!

*Moses. Lik.*

*Bedad, an' This is a fine in to be in o'ne jk into, an' the sooner in jk out o' it the better for everybody especially meself.*

*Let me have another rade o' that letter (reads) "There maybe other company present."*

*Be jakers, an' that's true anyway. I o'ne jk mixed up at a fine rate among them. I know was in o' to know any better, for they was all wearin' sprigs o' holly.*

*It she'd only sed she would mail her face green or put her nose in a ring, I could have told her at*



~~make~~ <sup>square</sup> ~~such~~ things ~~say~~. (Places his handkerchief carefully upon the floor and kneels upon it.)

LUCY.—Whatever is the man going to do? And who is he? (BROWN appears.)

MOSES G.—Neaw then, <sup>how thin, yes</sup> ~~that's~~ advertised for a <sup>husband an</sup> ~~fellow un~~ answered ~~it, an~~ neaw aw'll put th' finishin' touch to it.

LUCY.—But, sir, there is some mis—

MOSES G.—Shurrup till <sup>give</sup> ~~awve~~ dun. <sup>Gi</sup> ~~Aw~~ looves ~~tha'~~ <sup>ye</sup> (Grasps her hand.)

BROWN (coming forward).—What do you mean, sir? Let loose this lady's hand this minute.

MOSES G.—<sup>Get out or it</sup> ~~Thee hook it!~~ Tha knows nawt abawt this little job. <sup>at all!</sup> ~~at all!~~ <sup>You</sup> ~~nothing about it at all~~ <sup>this little job</sup>

LUCY.—Let me go, sir, I beg of you.

BROWN.—Yes, let her go, or I'll—

MOSES G. (rising and sparring).—<sup>You'll</sup> ~~Tha'll~~ what? (Exit BROWN terrified.)

LUCY.—How dare you offer to strike that gentleman?

MOSES G.—Whoy! what bisnes hed he to meddle <sup>wid out</sup> ~~with~~ cooartin?

LUCY.—Our courting? He is my intended and will avenge the insult you have put upon me. (Going).

MOSES G.—What—is n't yo're name Angelina?

LUCY.—No, it is not!

[Exit indignantly.]

MOSES G. (Sits).—This is a gradely hot mash to ger into ony rooad, un aw thinks the sooner aw geet awt on it, th' better ut'll be for o' parties—speshully misel—Here, dang ut o' let's hev another look ut th letter. (Does so). “Theer mabbee other company present.” Just soa, theer is that, un au've bin gettin foinely mixed among it, un aw mon weel, when they o' hez sprigs o' holly. Eh! if hoo'd only sed as hoo'd hev her face painted green, or her nooas in a sling, aw cud ha towed hor awt un a thaesand.

[Enter ETHEL.]

ETHEL.—I wonder where he's got to. (*Looks under table, &c.*)

MOSES G.—Here ~~he~~<sup>she</sup> is at last. ~~Hee~~<sup>she</sup>'s askin' for me.

ETHEL.—I was told he was up here somewhere. Now its no use you hidin', beecause—

MOSES G. (*Jumping up*)—~~He~~! awn not hidin'.

ETHEL. (*Starting*)—Who are you, sir?

MOSES G.—Wall—~~awn~~<sup>im jiverally called</sup> moeastly coed Moses Green.

ETHEL. (*Amused*)—Oh! indeed!

MOSES G.—~~Tha's~~<sup>youve</sup> heeurd that name ~~afere~~<sup>before</sup>, hesn't ta!

ETHEL.—Not that I am aware of.

[STERN *appears.*]

MOSES G.—Noan o' thi humpin' neaw. Didn't ~~tha~~<sup>ye</sup> promise as tha'd hev a sprig o' holly stuck i' thi head to meet?

ETHEL. (*laughing*)—Well! you see I've got a piece!

MOSES G.—That's reet, *right*

ETHEL.—But stay! Tell me first for what purpose you are here.

MOSES G.—~~Tha~~<sup>you</sup> knows as well as aw does. Aw've cum' as th' poet sez, ta bang my heart ~~at~~<sup>put</sup> thi feet.

ETHEL.—Well, you are a cure (*laughs*). I should certainly like to see you do it.

MOSES G. (*Kneels*)—~~Aw~~<sup>Oh</sup> can soon do ~~ut~~<sup>that</sup>.

STERN. (*Advances to them*)—Ethel, this is the last straw. To say that I am disappointed in you, is but ill to express the real state of my feelings in respect to your most flippant disregard of them. And you, sir, explain this uncalled for boldness,

MOSES G. (*Rising*)—~~Boy~~<sup>Be jabers in</sup> gum! if this dusn't lick awt—~~Whoy~~<sup>bate all</sup> corn't to leav us aloooan when wer happy.

STERN. (*Bitterly*)—On second thoughts I will leave you alone. Good evening and good bye, Ethel—As for you, sir, we shall meet again.

[Exit]





Moss another sprig of holly no Angelina  
Decaired again. Will just try  
Victory Martha's trick & drown my sadness  
(trick)  
That's gone. I've tasted worse. ~~There~~  
now an' it's lucky them sprigs of holly come  
in wan at a time, for ~~oime~~ bound to  
fit would or the right wan at last.  
(fit) (Trick of Aurora & Kate heard) Now for  
another trial



MOSES G.—<sup>an yr</sup>~~Un~~ is ~~thy~~ name Ethel?

ETHEL.—Don't bother me. You see what trouble you have brought me to. Oh! he shall not, must not go with that dread suspicion in his mind.

[Exit.]

MOSES G.—Another sprig o' holly and no Angelina. Done ageun. Aw mon tak afther Victory Martha and drawn my sadness. (*Drinks*). Hum! Aw've tasted woss. By gow, but ut's lucky them sprigs o' holly comes in one at a toime that rooad, aw'm bairnd to geet owd o' th' reet un at last. (*Reseats himself. Voice of AURORA and KATE heard*). Neaw furrit ageun.

[Enter AURORA and KATE arm-in-arm.] (*As they converse they pace backwards and forwards*).

AUR.—What with Mr. Brown and Mr. Stern looking so fierce and the two girls sighing their eyes out, our Christmas party shows great promise of failure.

KATE.—Hum! (*shrugging her shoulders*), the very idea of jealousy interfering with an affair of this sort. But the strangest thing of all is, they will not give the slightest explanation.

AUR.—No. I say Kate, wouldn't it be frightful, if Mr. Mc.Shiver—— Why are you staring at that chair so?

KATE.—Oh, Aurora, let us go away from here, for pity's sake.

AUR.—Why! Surely you are not superstitious.

KATE.—(*In a fearful whisper*). I saw a strange head pop up over that chair back.

AUR.—Nonsense. It's only that idle Victoria Martha. (*Pushes chair over. Moses is precipitated to the floor*).

MOSES G.—Neaw then! What <sup>are yez apleer now</sup>~~art tha~~ up to loike?

AUR.—Oh! I beg your pardon. I thought it was Victoria Martha!

MOSES G.—<sup>Do oi</sup>~~Dun~~ ~~aw~~ look loike Victory Martha? (*The girls laugh*).

AUR.—Well, not exactly. May I inquire your business here?

MOSES G.—My bizniz is cooartin' bizniz.

AUR.—One of Victoria Martha's followers, I see.

MOSES G.—No<sup>oim</sup>, aw<sup>oim</sup> not that, payther. Aw'm afther a lass what has a sprig o' holly stuck in her heud. Neaw<sup>how</sup> you've booath <sup>get</sup> sprigs an yo're booath varra <sup>noice</sup> ta look <sup>at</sup> <sup>how</sup> at, an it's no use o' <sup>or the two of us</sup> boytherin' a chap's head longer than yo' con help—which <sup>on ye is it? (Kneels between them and takes a hand of each.)</sup> Mc.SHIVER and SPEED appear).

KATE.—Well, you cannot have the pair of us. Which do you prefer?

SPEED.—(*Aside—Savagely*). This is too much!

AUR.—I am generally considered the best looking.

Mc. SHIV.—(*Tragically*). Ye gods! that it should come to this. Are there no paving-stones to hurl on this vile monster's cranium. (BROWN and STERN appear.)

MOSES G.—(*After many affectionate glances from one to the other*) Which af you two sent me this bit o' papper?

Mc.SHIV.—(*Rushing forward, followed by STERN and seizing the letter*). Ha! Ha! Revenge.

SPEED.—(*Who has also rushed forward followed by BROWN*). Yes. We will have revenge.

*Enter ETHEL, LUCY, and VIC. MAR.*

(*Momentary tableau. AURORA and KATE appear mystified. MOSES GREEN is seized by SPEED, BROWN, and STERN. Mc.SHIVER is holding the letter up in triumph. VICTORIA MARTHA is serenely folding her arms behind her, while ETHEL and LUCY stand with hands clasped*).

BROWN.—How shall we serve the fellow for his pains?

SPEED.—I vote for chucking him through the window.

STERN.—And I wish that I had a good horsewhip at hand.

Mc.SHIVER.—Friends, Romans, countrymen—or rather ladies and gentlemen, before we consider the respective merits of those modes of chastisement, let us read the effusion that fate has so kindly thrown into my hands at the most opportune moment, and which may have the effect of



throwing a new light upon what now appears as an unpardonable piece of presumption.

OMNES.—Hear, Hear !

Mc.SHIVER.—Then, with your permission I proceed.

111, Great Comfort Street,  
December 23rd.

Dear Sir,

I have just received your very kind answer to my advertisement, and I shall be glad to see you at the above address on Christmas Eve. There may be other company present, but you will know me as I shall wear a sprig of holly in my hair,

Yours sincerely  
Angelina Groggs.

(*All look surprised. VIC. MAR. advances.*)

VIC. MAR.—Angelina Groggs? Why that's her what lives ten doors higher up, and whats bin a-advertisin her ugly self in the "*Monimatrial Times*," which its here in my pocket. (*Produces it*). An' this 'ere simple noodle was agoin to see her, an' he's got to the wrong house. (*Pointing to MOSES*). Oh! What a noodle! ha! ha! (*All join in the laugh*).

BROWN.—But this does not explain his making love to all our lady friends.

VIC. MAR.—In course it does. Have n't we all made a fool of him without knowin' it. We've all got sprigs of holly in our hair. Here's mine!

MOSES G. (*Rising from floor.*)—Yo' <sup>must</sup> ~~mon~~ exkews ~~me~~, ~~chapses~~, <sup>boy</sup> for gerrin' agate coartin' yo're ~~lasses~~—~~an—on~~ <sup>on</sup> ~~on~~ <sup>you</sup> ~~mon~~ <sup>will</sup> exkews ~~me~~. Aw'm off to seek Angelina. (*General laugh*).

AUR.—Stay a moment, Mr. Green. Perhaps you are not aware that Angelina, as you call her, is an old lady of sixty at the least.

MOSES G.—Wall! <sup>or</sup> ~~aw~~ reckon <sup>or can't</sup> ~~hee~~ ~~corn't~~ help that.

VIC. MAR.—What a burning shame it would be if he went and threw himself away on that old witch. (*Turning to MOSES*). Do you know as her teeth cost her ten guineas, and she wears a glass eye, and paints her cheeks, and wears a wig, and—and—

*or can't*

MOSES G.—(Solidly). Wall! Hoo ~~can't~~ help that!

VIC. MAR.—(Desperately). And—oh dear! and she has a cork leg!

MOSES G.—A cork leg! Then, *be jabs* ~~by~~ gow, no Angelina for me.

VIC. MAR.—And—and—I haven't.

KATE.—You see how the wind blows, Moses. When one woman calumniates another, there is generally something in it.

MOSES G.—Is there *something* ~~summat~~, in it, Victory Martha?

VIC. MAR.—(Shyly). There may be, and there mayn't  
(Bites the corner of her apron and fidgets).

MOSES G.—Wall, give us a kiss, and that'll settle it. (They embrace under Mistletoe).

AUR.—That's right, and now we will return to the music down stairs.

MOSES G.—Stop a bit! Au've geet Victory Martha, *give it* ~~an~~ *See that* ~~aw~~ meun to keep hor. (Takes a ring from vest pocket). ~~Sitha,~~ *See that* ~~aw~~ bowt a ring so as ter engage miself to Angelina, ~~an~~ neaw aw'm gooin' to put it on Victory Martha. (Does so, VICTORIA holds it in every light and admires it). Neaw yo're o' witnesses. (Puts his arm round her waist and retires).

OMNES.—We are.

AUR.—(To audience.):

'Tis now *high* time we made our parting bow,  
For other pleasures wait for us below,  
And if by you our work shall be commended,  
Then joy is our's and anxious fears are ended.  
If there's a moral in our piece, pray find it,  
And if you can't—well then, pray never mind it;  
Regard the fun, excuse the faults and folly  
That may exist in this our "Sprig of Holly."

(Walk off in couples, VIC. MAR. and MOSES bringing up the rear).

## THE SEVENTH RIB.

---

Old Doctor D—— is dead and gone,  
 Departed May 11th,  
 And all his goods and chattels go  
 To Mrs. D—— the seventh.

For creatures of the other sex,  
 He harboured great affection ;  
 But p'raps my hearers will permit  
 A little retrospection.

At twenty-one he loved his work,  
 And honours bravely carried ;  
 But even more than work he lov'd  
 A girl—and they were married

Quoth Doctor D——, "Of this my eye  
 Thou art the precious pupil ;"  
 Alas! that fair young damsel died,  
 By accident—and *blue-pill* !

Stunned by the blow, young Doctor D——  
 Could scarce the shock recover ;  
 For *one long month* he mourned her loss,  
 And doffed the garb of lover.

But lo! a maiden's winning smiles  
 Beamed forth from almond eyes !  
 The M.D. fell and heeded not  
 Impatient patient's cries.

Once more his home a mistress had,  
 Once more his life ran placid ;  
 Until those *almond* eyes mistook  
 For noyeau—prussic acid !

A widow bland next shared his lot,  
 Her christian name was Topsy ;  
 She slyly took her little drops,  
 And met her doom in *drops-y*.



Then came a fourth—a foreigner,  
 (Nativity, Geneva,)  
 Her passion for canary birds  
 Collapsed in *yellow* fever.

The next was fat and forty: quite  
 A paragon of women!  
 It may sound awfully vulgar, but  
 The couple “got on swimmin’.”

For every morn ’twas their delight,  
 To dip into the bay near,  
 And though a staunch teetotaller,  
*She* died of *dip-so-mania*!

The sixth hailed straight from Paris gay,  
 Arrayed in lace of Brussels,  
 And feathers rare—to cut it short,  
 She ate some poisoned mussels!

Then Mrs. D—— the seventh came,  
 The relict of one Nixon;  
 Alas! for Doctor D——, she proved  
 A turbulent old vixen.

He could not live her yoke beneath,  
 And so expired—a martyr!  
 His final words to her were these—  
 You are the *cream of tartar*!



MAKE WINE NOW FOR CHILDREN'S PARTIES.



"HURRAH! IT'S MASON'S.  
A 6<sup>D</sup> Bottle of  
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